

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 SAB-01 DHA-02 SY-05 OC-05 CCO-00 A-01

OPR-02 AID-05 EB-07 ACDA-05 USSS-00 SCCT-01 CU-02

PPT-01 PER-01 COME-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 /112 W

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O 101350Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6599

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12643

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: BEIRUT AWAITING RESULTS OF KARAME'S DAMASCUS TRIP

REF: BEIRUT 12601 (9 OCT 75 1455Z)

SUMMARY: FIGHTING CONTINUES IN BEIRUT ON A REDUCED SCALE FROM THE HIGHPOINT OF SEVERAL DAYS AGO, AS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STILL SUFFERS ACUTELY. NORTH LEBANON REMAINS A SORE SPOT. PRIMIN KARAME RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS ACHIEVED. THESE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED, BUT UNDOUBTEDLY INVOLVE COMBINED SYRIAN/PLO SUPPORT FOR RENEWED MOVES TO GAIN AN EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE. POLITICAL SPECULATION CENTERS ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CABINET WILL BE EXPANDED AND ON THE EFFECT THIS WOULD HAVE ON THE CURRENTLY IDLE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE". END SUMMARY.

1. ALTHOUGH EXCHANGES OF FIRE OCCURRED IN BEIRUT DURING THE NIGHT OF OCT 9-10, SOMETIMES ON A FAIRLY HEAVY SCALE, THE GENERAL LEVEL OF FIGHTING WAS LESS THAN THE NIGHT BEFORE. THE CITY QUIETED DOWN AFTER DAYBREAK AND REMAINS RELATIVELY CALM AS OF 1300 HOURS (LOCAL) TODAY, OCT 10. HOWEVER, ARMED MEN REMAIN IN MANY PARTS OF TOWN, AND SPORADIC SHOOTING AND EXPLOSIONS ARE AUDIBLE.

2. ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN BEIRUT REMAINS AT VIRTUAL STAND-STILL. THE MOST RECENT BOMBINGS AND FIGHTING HAVE CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DESTRUCTION IN ANOTHER MAJOR MARKETING AREA, ROUGHLY ENCOMPASSING SOUK TAWILEH, BAB-EDRISS, RUE FOCH AND RUE ALLENBY. BECAUSE PANAM'S PASSENGER TRAFFIC IS ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF NORMAL LEVEL, IT IS CONSIDERING MAKING MAJOR CUTS IN BOTH 747 AND 707 SERVICE THROUGH BEIRUT STARTING NEXT WEEK. MEA, WHICH CARRIES ABOUT 55 PERCENT OF PASSENGER TRAFFIC THROUGH BEIRUT AIRPORT, PLANS NO CUTS IN SERVICE EVEN THOUGH PASSENGER TRAFFIC NOW AT ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF NORMAL LEVEL. HOTEL OCCUPANCY RATES HAVE HIT ALL-TIME LOW AT MAJOR HOTELS; PHOENICIA REPORTS 12 PERCENT. BECAUSE TANKER TRUCK DRIVERS HAVE NOT SHOWN UP, DIESEL FUEL HAS NOT BEEN  
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DELIVERED FOR SEVERAL DAYS FROM MEDRECO REFINERY NEAR SIDON; BEIRUT STOCKS NOW NEARLY EXHAUSTED. IF NO DELIVERIES FROM MEDRECO MADE SOON, SHORTAGE WILL AFFECT OPERATION OF HOSPITALS, BAKERIES, AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SERVICES. (MOBIL, WHICH ACTS AS COORDINATOR FOR MARKETING COMPANIES, HAS ASSURED SUPPLY TO AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL.) FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK OF NEW YORK, GOODYEAR, AND GENERAL MOTORS HAVE DECIDED TO EVACUATE REMAINING EXPATRIATE STAFF AND DEPENDENTS

AND TEMPORARILY TO SET UP OPERATIONS ELSEWHERE.

3. THE SITUATION IN TRIPOLI AND THE NORTH REMAINS TENSE, AND OBSERVERS DO NOT DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER OUTBREAKS THERE. THE TRIPOLI-BEIRUT ROAD IS SAID TO BE DANGEROUS TODAY. A "NEW MASSACRE" OCCURRED YESTERDAY IN A CHRISTIAN VILLAGE IN THE AKKAR REGION, PERPETRATED BY NEIGHBORING MOSLEMS WHO KILLED AND WOUNDED ABOUT A SCORE OF VILLAGERS IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE A NON-POLITICAL VENDETTA. LEFTIST PARTIES HAVE STRONGLY CONDEMNED THE INCIDENT. AS YET, DESPITE THE EMOTIONS INEVITABLY STIRRED, IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE PROVOKING A CONFSSIONAL CONFRONTATION.

4. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, INTEREST CENTERS ON THE AFTERMATH OF KARAME'S TRIP TO DAMASCUS. HE RETURNED LATE YESTERDAY EXPRESSING CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM, AND THIS HAS RENEWED HOPE FOR AN END TO THE CURRENT ROUND OF FIGHTING. THERE IS NO CERTAINTY ABOUT WHAT HE ACHIEVED, BUT THE FACT THAT HE SAW 'ARAFAT IN DAMASCUS AND SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITY HERE BRINGS GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT SOMETHING IS AFOOT INVOLVING THE PALESTINIANS. ONE VERSION IS THAT HE GOT A SYRIAN/PLO PROMISE TO CONTROL ALL PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS, SOME OF WHOM SHARE PART OF THE BLAME FOR THE RECENT UPSURGE IN FIGHTING. THIS PROMISE ALLEGEDLY CAME AFTER KARAME TRANSMITTED A GEMAYEL PROMISE SENT THROUGH FRANGIE THAT THE PHALANGE WOULD HONOR THE CEASEFIRE. ANOTHER STORY IS THAT SYRIA AND 'ARAFAT GAVE THEIR SUPPORT FOR AS YET UNDISCLOSED MEASURES TO PUT SITUATION IN ORDER (PERHAPS ENTRANCE OF THE ARMY). INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN AND 'ARAFAT MET IN BEIRUT THIS MORNING, AND A LATE UNCONFIRMED REPORT IS THAT SAIQA IS APPEARING IN LEFTIST-HELD AREAS TO RESTRAIN FIGHTING AND THAT CHAMOUN HIMSELF IS TOURING PHALANGE FRONTLINES WITH ISF PATROLS.

5. THERE IS SPECULATION THAT KARAME MAY MOVE TO EXPAND HIS  
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CABINET, REPORTEDLY TO 18 MEMBERS INCLUDING BOTH GEMAYEL AND JUMBLATT OR THEIR SURROGATES. ACCORDING TO THIS SCENARIO, HE HAS SYRIAN BACKING FOR THE IDEA AND A SYRIAN PROMISE TO PRESS JUMBLATT TO ACCEPT GEMAYEL'S PRESENCE. IF THIS MOVE MATERIALIZES, THE QUESTION OF THE USEFULNESS OF THE "NATIONAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE" WILL INEVITABLY ARISE. THAT BODY DID NOT MEET YESTERDAY AND NO DATE HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR RESUMPTION OF ITS SESSIONS.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE SIGNS THAT KARAME MADE GAINS IN DAMASCUS, EUPHORIA IS BY NO MEANS UNIVERSAL. MANY POLITICALLY AWARE LEBANESE, HAVING BEEN MISLED IN THE PAST, ARE ADOPTING A "SHOW ME" ATTITUDE.  
GODLEY

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